



## HANDHELDS FAQ

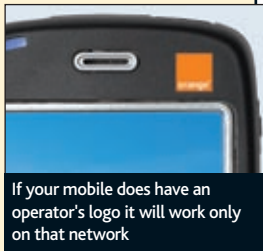
**Q** I've heard that some phones are locked to a particular network's SIM card. How can you tell if a phone is locked, and is there any way of unlocking a phone?

**A** When you buy a mobile phone that is supplied with a SIM card, it is often not possible to put another network's SIM card in that handset. The best way to tell if a handset is locked is to see if the network's logo is anywhere on the phone. If it is, the phone is locked to that network. After you have had a handset for a year, network operators can provide you with an unlock code for around £30.

There are cheaper ways of unlocking a phone, though. Several websites will send you an unlock code if you provide your IMEI number (usually written in the battery compartment), and many independent phone shops provide an unlocking service for around £10.

To save unlocking your handset at all, buy your phone SIM-free from a website such as [www.expansys.com](http://www.expansys.com). This is more expensive than buying from a network, but your new phone is yours to do with as you please.

[chris@computershopper.co.uk](mailto:chris@computershopper.co.uk)



If your mobile does have an operator's logo it will work only on that network

### REVIEW MOBILE PHONE

## T-MOBILE Sidekick II

RATING ★★★★★

PRICE From free to £50 inc

VAT depending on contract

SUPPLIER T-Mobile 01707 315000

DETAILS [www.t-mobile.co.uk](http://www.t-mobile.co.uk)

T-Mobile's Sidekick II's most striking feature is its rotating screen, but the handset is more than a phone with a gimmick. Technically it is not a smartphone, but it offers many of the features of Windows Mobile or Symbian-based phones.

The handset is available only on T-Mobile's Web'n'Walk tariff, as it is first and foremost a messaging device. When the screen is closed it looks like a gaming deck, but the LCD flips and rotates out of the way to reveal a rubber QWERTY keyboard. The keyboard's rubber keys are well spaced and easy to use. Typing messages is easier than using a touch screen and stylus. There is a scroll wheel to browse through the phone's menus, and four large buttons around the screen to go backwards and forwards through the menu system.

The email program is powerful and easy to use. An email setup wizard takes you through setting up your T-Mobile mail account. You compose messages in the normal way using your address book or by entering an address manually. The email program is particularly good at dealing with attachments. You can send emails with photos or business cards attached, but the Sidekick II can also display Word or PDF attachments. These are transcribed into the body of the message. While PDFs lose any images they contained, the handset will display and format the PDF's text.

Although the Sidekick II has a USB port, the manual states that it is for developers only and not for connecting to your PC. The Sidekick II



synchronises over GPRS and you can view your handset's contents on the web. The

Desktop Interface is very clear, and having the ability to access your handset's contents from any PC is very useful. However, we would prefer the option to connect directly to a PC to save on GPRS costs.

The Sidekick II also has a full web browser. Pages are automatically reformatted to fit the screen, and the handset's landscape format means there is a reasonable amount of room to view pages despite its low 240x160 pixel resolution. Although the Sidekick II doesn't support 3G, even graphics-heavy pages download fairly quickly over GPRS.

The device may cope well with messaging and the internet, but it doesn't work too well as a phone. You can look through the phone book or dial numbers using the scroll wheel without opening the flip, but the call sound quality is fairly poor. Voices are fuzzy and indistinct, and the microphone picks up excessive amounts of background noise.

T-Mobile's Sidekick II is an excellent messaging and internet phone. It is easier to set up and use than most smartphones and the email program is excellent. It's a shame that it has relatively poor call quality. However, it is very good value for such a powerful handset.

Chris Fynamore

✓ Excellent internet and messaging functions

✗ Poor call quality and camera

**SPECIFICATIONS** Tri-band, 240x160 pixel 65,000-colour LCD, 16MB flash memory, POP3/IMAP4 push email, 4½ hours of talk time, 2½ days of standby, 66x129x23mm, weighs 198g. **Part code** Sidekick II

### HOTLIST GPS NAVIGATION PACK

## TOMTOM Navigator 5 Navigation Pack

RATING ★★★★★

PRICE £349 inc VAT

SUPPLIER [www.eurosim.com](http://www.eurosim.com)

DETAILS [www.tomtom.com](http://www.tomtom.com)

TomTom's navigation pack includes an HP iPAQ PDA, a TomTom Bluetooth GPS receiver and version 5 of TomTom's Navigator software.

The kit is easy to set up; the software installs automatically from the supplied SD card and is configured to pair with the Bluetooth receiver included. The software is easy to use with voice prompts and a clear display.

A great-value PDA and navigation device.



**SPECIFICATIONS** GPS navigation kit, HP iPAQ hx2110 PDA, TomTom Bluetooth GPS receiver, TomTom Navigator 5 software, windscreen/dashboard mount

### HOTLIST MOBILE PHONE

## SONY ERICSSON W800i

RATING ★★★★★

PRICE £325 SIM-free; from free to £200

with contract

SUPPLIER [www.epinnacle.co.uk](http://www.epinnacle.co.uk)

(SIM-free); Orange/Vodafone/O<sub>2</sub>/T-Mobile/Virgin (contract)

DETAILS [www.sonyericsson.co.uk](http://www.sonyericsson.co.uk)

This is a superb music player and phone in one. Transferring music to the phone is easy using the supplied software, and the phone's music-playing application is fast. Sound quality is superb, and the camera is the best we have seen on a phone.



**SPECIFICATIONS** Music phone, tri-band, 400 hours standby, 540 minutes of talk time, Bluetooth/IR connectivity, radio, 512MB memory Stick Duo, 176x200-pixel display, 99g, 100x46x20.5mm (HWD). **Part code** W800

### HOTLIST PDA

## T-MOBILE MDA Pro

RATING ★★★★★

PRICE £130 to £350 inc VAT depending

on contract

SUPPLIER T-Mobile 01707 315000

DETAILS [www.t-mobile.co.uk](http://www.t-mobile.co.uk)

The MDA Pro is the first PDA and phone combination we have seen with Windows Mobile 5. Its clamshell body opens to reveal a full-size keyboard, so it's perfect for typing emails and the occasional document. Wireless networking and GPRS are built in, making the MDA Pro excellent for messaging.



**SPECIFICATIONS** Windows Mobile 5, 520MHz Intel PXA270 processor, 48MB RAM, 3.6" 640x480 screen, 3G/GPRS/Bluetooth/802.11b/IR/USB connectivity, built-in QWERTY keyboard, 1.3-megapixel camera, SD card slot, 79x22x132mm, weighs 210g



## REVIEW PORTABLE MEDIA PLAYER

EPSON  
P-4000

RATING ★★★★★

PRICE £453 inc VAT

SUPPLIER [www.dabs.com](http://www.dabs.com)DETAILS [www.epson.co.uk](http://www.epson.co.uk)

The P-4000 is described as a multimedia storage viewer, but while it has support for music and video files, it is best suited to serious photographers.

It is bulky and heavy, and most of its front is taken up with the large 3.8" screen. As it is designed to view photos the player has a high resolution for its size of 640x480 pixels. The screen is impressive. It has a reflective surface, so contrast is superb; blacks are very dark and colours are vibrant. The screen's only problem is that images are sometimes too dark, even on its brightest setting.

Transferring media on to the player is simple, as Windows recognises the P-4000 as a USB hard disk. You can also copy files straight from an SD or CompactFlash memory card. The player views RAW format files taken with high-end Nikon, Canon, Konica Minolta, Pentax and Epson digital cameras, or JPEG-format images from low and mid-range cameras. It doesn't support any other image types, so is no good if you have other file types on your PC. The menu system makes it easy to navigate photos; media is organised in folders, and the unit displays clear thumbnails for each image.

The P-4000 supports direct printing, so you can plug it into a Direct Print Standard-compatible printer and print photos from the player. Its imaging credentials are further boosted by its support for image meta data. Pressing the Display button when viewing an image brings up an information page with data such as the camera's ISO speed and the focal length when the picture was taken, and there is a histogram display for JPEG files.

The P-4000's audio and video playback functions seem like an afterthought compared to the comprehensive image support. The music player supports AAC and MP3 files, but the interface is fairly primitive with no playlist support. The P-4000 is not supplied with any headphones, but sound quality through a reasonable pair of third-party headphones is good apart from some muddy treble.

Sadly, the player is fussy about playing video. It supports MPEG4 video files with MP3 or AAC audio, but be careful about setting the resolution and bit rate, or the P-4000 won't play the file. Once you do find a format that works, colours are vibrant and playback is smooth and free of stutter.

Epson's P-4000 is a superb photo viewer, and its high-resolution reflective screen gives an accurate preview of images. The 80GB hard disk is also large enough to store a lot of digital photos. But despite its excellent video quality, its limited number of video formats restricts its scope as a credible portable media player.

Chris Finnamore



Logical menu system; impressive screen



Limited audio and video support; expensive

**SPECIFICATIONS** Portable media player, 80GB hard disk, 3.8" 640x480 resolution LCD, SD/CF memory card slots, USB Hi-Speed, A/V and audio outputs, 84x147x31.4mm, weighs 415g. **Part code** B31B179012DU

## HOTLIST POCKET PC

ACER  
n50 Premium

RATING ★★★★★

PRICE £231 inc VAT

SUPPLIER [www.dabs.com](http://www.dabs.com)DETAILS [www.acer.co.uk](http://www.acer.co.uk)

Acer's n50 won a Best Buy award in our PDA Megatest (*Labs, Shopper* August 2005) with its powerful performance, stylish looks and low price. It has a brushed metal effect casing and simple, uncluttered design. Applications start up almost instantly. It has good battery life and infrared, Bluetooth and wireless networking built in, as well as a generous 124MB of user-available storage. Excellent value.



**SPECIFICATIONS** Intel PXA272 520MHz processor, 124.27MB RAM, SD card slot, Windows Mobile 2003 SE, weighs 150g. **Part code** CP.N500H.024

## HOTLIST SMARTPHONE GPS KIT

NAVICORE  
Personal for  
Symbian Series 60

RATING ★★★★★

PRICE £175 inc VAT

SUPPLIER [www.mobilefun.co.uk](http://www.mobilefun.co.uk)DETAILS [www.navicoretech.com](http://www.navicoretech.com)

Navicore's Personal is a GPS navigation system for the Symbian Series 60 operating system, as used by Nokia and Siemens smartphones. It consists of a Bluetooth GPS receiver and an RS MMC card containing the map program.

Planning a route is easy thanks to the logical software, and voice prompts are clear and accurate. It's not cheap, but it's the best GPS system for a series 60 phone.



**SPECIFICATIONS** GPS Navigation for Symbian Series 60 OS, SiRF III Bluetooth GPS receiver, UK maps. **Part code** 133-8432

## CHOOSING A...

SMART  
PHONE

## Four points to remember when buying a smartphone

**1** A smartphone's operating system – Palm, Pocket PC or Symbian – dictates its basic features and what third-party software you can install. Windows Mobile 5.0 Second Edition has the familiar look and feel of Windows, right down to a Start button. Palm devices are preferred by many for their ease of use and the vast number of third-party applications available for them. Symbian is quite common on handset-style smartphones. While Symbian's underlying operating system stays the same, enabling third-party programmers to develop software for the OS, its interface can be fully customised by the phone manufacturer and so it may differ from phone to phone.

**2** All smartphones come with a colour screen. A high-colour depth of 65,536 colours is important for viewing photos or video clips.

Typically users navigate and input information into a handset type of smartphone using the keypad and buttons or a jog dial. PDA-style smartphones usually have a touch screen, and both Pocket PC and Palm have handwriting recognition features as well as onscreen keyboards. A few have a built-in QWERTY keyboard.

**3** Cameras are common in smartphones. Resolution is limited, with two megapixels and a fixed focus lens being the best you'll get. However, as most images will be viewed only onscreen or sent as a video message, this shouldn't be a problem.

**4** Bluetooth makes it easier to link your phone to a PC for synchronisation or wireless web access. For internet access, a GPRS or 3G mobile contract is essential. Sign up for a data bundle when buying your smartphone and it will work out cheaper.

FILL IN YOUR SPECS HERE  
(Recommended minimum in grey)

STYLE: Handset

OS: Pocket PC Smartphone 2002

SCREEN: 176x220; 65,536 colours

INPUTS: Keypad

CAMERA: 640x480

BLUETOOTH: Yes

DATA CALLS: GPRS